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Nebraska Ranks Second in Volunteerism Rates, Gov. Heineman Announces

(Lincoln, Neb.) A national survey of American states released today has ranked Nebraska second in U.S. rates of volunteerism, a statistic lauded by Gov. Dave Heineman, First Lady Sally Ganem and members of the Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission (NVSC) as evidence of the effectiveness of Nebraska's volunteer army.

"In a state where we believe in the power of personal responsibility, it is refreshing to see that Nebraskans continue to recognize volunteerism as a part of that responsibility," Gov. Heineman said. "Serving others is part of what makes Nebraska a true community."

Nearly 43 percent of all Nebraskans volunteer, according to "Volunteering in America: State Trends and Rankings," a report released by the Corporation for National and Community Service. Only the residents of Utah volunteer at a higher rate.

The study analyzed data collected over the past four years by the U.S. Census Bureau in its annual Volunteer Supplement to the Current Population Survey. This study is the first attempt to break the research into volunteering habits and patterns by state and region.

The data shows that Nebraska volunteers have provided an average of 44 hours of service each year since 2002. The annual value of that volunteerism has been estimated at \$1.1 billion, based on Independent Sector's hourly estimate of the value of volunteer time.

First Lady Ganem said, "Nebraskans are exceptionally giving and caring individuals. This concern and compassion for one another is a true strength of our state, and it is a contributing factor to the quality of life we all enjoy."

Cynthia Buettner, chairwoman of the NVSC, said, "Whether through faith-based organizations, civic groups, or other recognized non-profit agencies, Nebraska's strong national showing in volunteerism rates is a source of pride. In particular, the rates among seniors and young adults are a source for continued growth."

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David Eisner, CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service, said, “We believe that community service is an effective means of meeting vital needs in communities across America. This report is a powerful tool to help states and communities increase volunteering and build the infrastructure of nonprofits and communities to respond to community challenges through citizen service.”

Corporation programs are key cogs in Nebraska volunteerism. In 2005, 6,342 Nebraskans served in Senior Corps, nearly 200 were AmeriCorps volunteers, and 550 facilitated service-learning programs sponsored by Learn and Serve America.

The Corporation’s goal for the survey is to increase the number of Americans volunteering by more than 10 million people by 2010.

National service participants help community nonprofit organizations, faith-based groups, schools, and local agencies meet critical community needs in education, the environment, public safety, homeland security, and other areas. In addition, participants in Corporation programs recruit, train, and coordinate community volunteers, enabling local groups to expand their services. Here in Nebraska, the NVSC is the state entity dedicated to mobilizing and supporting the efforts of Nebraskans united to strengthen their communities, state and nation through volunteer and national service.

For more information about service opportunities in Nebraska, please visit the Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission online at <http://www.nvsc.ne.gov>.

To view the full national service report, which features a two-page profile for each state, visit <http://www.nationalservice.gov>.

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